

## VOLUME 11, NO. 3 Fall 1993

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### BCI Field Workshops Provide Training

This summer over 30 wildlife biologists, naturalists, and bat aficionados from across the United States came to Portal, Arizona, to participate in two intensive five-day workshops focusing on bat conservation and management. Merlin Tuttle led field demonstrations and provided lectures to introduce research techniques for the study and protection of bats. He was assisted by BCI's assistant program director, Janet Tyburec, and bat biologists David Lee and Mary K. Clark from the North Carolina State Museum. The workshops were co-hosted by the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Held at the unique ecological crossroads between the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts in southeastern Arizona, workshop headquarters were at the American Museum of Natural History's Southwestern Research Station in the heart of Cave Creek Canyon. The area is one of unusually high biological diversity and is home to 22 species of bats, more than can be seen in one area anywhere else in the United States or Canada.

From an opening trip to view the emergence of hundreds of thousands of Mexican free-tailed bats from a nearby cave to wrapping up five days later with a night of intensive bat netting, the group was immersed in the study of bats. During the course of the workshops, participants directly observed 18 of the total bat species ever recorded from this area. In just one night, 14 species were taken from a single net, and later that evening participants were able to observe two species of nectar bats visiting hummingbird feeders. One participant exclaimed "for someone who had never handled a bat before, this was perhaps the greatest thrill!"

A highlight of the course included learning how to radio-track bats, an activity which yielded the first-ever data about the day-roosting behavior of the southwestern myotis (*Myotis auriculus*). The discovery has prompted ongoing research by the U.S. Forest Service to study roosting requirements for these and other species of bats.

Participants left with the tools, resources, and inspiration to educate others about bats, identify them by species, assess their habitat requirements, and much more. The practical, hands-on experience will equip them to accomplish much for bats in their own regions.

□Janet Tyburec

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*Merlin Tuttle (center) displays a pallid bat as workshop participants look on. From left to right: Cristi Baldino, Janet Tyburec, Gary Helbing, and Diana Simons. The group netted 14 species in a single night..*

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